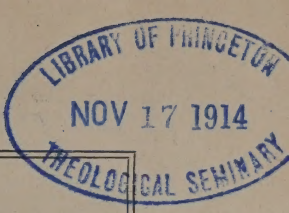
CLIFFORD

The War and The Churches

D639
.R4C63

D639
.R4C63

D639
.R4C63



THE WAR
AND
THE CHURCHES

BY

JOHN CLIFFORD, M.A., LL.D., D.D.

LONDON
JAMES CLARKE & CO., 13 & 14, FLEET STREET

W. SPEAIGHT & SONS,
PRINTERS, FETTER LANE,
LONDON, E.C.

The War and the Churches

Preached on Sunday Evening, August 16, in Westbourne Park Baptist Church, London, on the outbreak of war between Great Britain and Germany.

"In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."—ISAIAH XXX. 15.

I SPOKE to you this morning of the Reign of War and the Rule of God, in the hope that I might aid you, in facing this time of suffering and strain, in the right temper, with confidence in the God and Father of all the families of the earth, with sweet reasonableness, with quietness of soul, pity and prayerfulness; and that in all things, as British Christians, we may work out God's Holy Will in this perilous hour of our world's history.

To-night I speak of the Churches and the War.

Most of you know that I recently attended a Conference at Constance of representatives of the whole Protestant world, in the interests of Peace. The purpose of that gathering was to initiate methods of organising and concentrating the forces of the Protestant Churches upon securing such relations amongst the nationalities of Europe, and of the world, as

would make an end of war and establish Universal Peace.

It is agreed that all the resources and energies, motives and ideals of the Christianity of Christ Jesus have to be brought into action for the ending of brute force amongst the peoples of the earth, and inaugurating the sovereignty of reason, goodwill and brotherhood ; and yet it is notorious that the Churches do not move together as one solid and enthusiastic army for the carrying out of their accepted programme. They might end all wars, if they would. But they and their members are often implicated in wars. They take part in them. They glorify the victories won by the sword. By their silent acquiescence, they maintain enormous armaments, fatal to the social well-being of the Commonwealth. Now the meetings at Constance were arranged in the hope that something might be done to persuade these Churches to make it a primary part of their God-given work to act in concert for the abolition of strife amongst all races and peoples, and for the establishment of world-wide peace.

You know we met under the most unfavourable conditions. Never shall I forget the pain and apprehension with which I saw at Worms, on Thursday, July 30 (two days before our gathering, and five before the declaration of German mobilisation), a long train laden with soldiers and horses, cannons and the munitions of war,

travelling from Gmunden in Bavaria, towards the battle-fields of the South. It was an omen of evil. The fatal hour was about to strike. We knew our time was short. But awed and energised by the situation, we met and did our work; affirmed our principles and purposes, and appointed our Executive Committee to prepare for our future gatherings.

Could anything be more futile, somebody will say. Our answer is, that we are sure it was in the divine order, that we should meet when we did, and where we did. Our experiences have illumined and fortified our convictions. Our ideals are gripped with greater tenacity. Britishers and Americans, French and Germans, Danes and Norwegians, Swedes and Bulgarians, are linked together in a perpetual covenant to bring the entire strength of the Churches to bear in the solution of the problem of universal peace.

It is my desire to forward that work by answering the question, What are the Churches to do in this war?

First, we must endeavour to understand, to discover the seeds out of which this accursed harvest has grown, to get below the material happenings to the actual and operative causes; secondly, we must ask what should be our behaviour at this juncture in the world's history, when the world seems to have lost its way, when the social order is breaking up, and the civilisation of centuries is blasted with death;

and thirdly, we must prepare for securing the most beneficent and enduring results out of this war, for humanity, for Europe, and for our fatherland, so that instead of this war being the precursor of other terrible wars it shall be the last of them, and that the final issues shall be a linking up of the nations one with another, in such a way as shall extinguish the sovereignty of the sword and bring in the sovereignty of good sense, true brotherhood, and peace.

Our first work is not to condemn, but to understand. Each of the parties engaged in this stupendous conflict has its own defence. Judging each nation by its own defenders, we are all innocent. The Kaiser cries aloud, "Russia has betrayed us"; "Germany enters into the conflict with a clear conscience"; and few of us can doubt that Prussia has keenly felt the pressure of the Czar. Russian apologists make out that they are not at fault, and that they were willing for mediation. France, Italy, and the small States of Western Europe declare that Germany is the aggressor. Britain affirms that she is battling for fidelity to treaties, the independence of small states, and the freedom of humanity. The criminal in this greatest war of history will be discovered one day. The verdict of guilty will assuredly be given, although the causes and the condition may be too complex

and involved for it to be delivered now.

Spinoza says, "When I applied my mind to politics, so that I might examine what belongs to politics, with the same precision of mind as we use for mathematics, I have taken the best pains not to laugh at the actions of mankind, not to groan over them, not to be angry with them, but to understand them."

That is our temper and aim. We want to discover the conditions out of which the war has sprung; the seed of which it is the fruit; the acts which made arbitration impossible and wholesale fratricide inevitable.

The occasion, we know, is the action of Austria in the treatment of the crimes committed at Serajevo. That action was, however, only the match which produced the conflagration. Its real causes are deeper. Can we reach them? Will it help us to find them, if we determine as carefully as we can, *what is really at stake now the war is on?* Everybody sees and feels that uncounted millions of money are at stake. Trade is dislocated. Credit is gone. The industries of the world are thwarted, choked, stopped, ruined. The means of living are in peril. Myriads of our own brothers, sons of God as we are, wearing His image and spoken to by His Spirit, are hunting, wounding, maiming and murdering one another. Home-life is blighted and blasted. The curses of the greatest war of history are

sweeping down upon us like an avalanche, and God only knows what they carry in their march.

But more is at stake than that, awful as it is. The battle now proceeding is a battle of principles, central and fundamental to man's existence, development, progress and well-being in all the coming ages. It is a battle of moral ideals and ideas against immoral; of spiritual forces against material; of a social order, based upon principles of reason and justice, against a social order built up on savagery draped with culture, and barbaric tyranny robed in the garb of civilisation. It is a fight for the rights of the human soul to freedom, independence and self-control against an arrogant, autocratic, swaggering and cruel military caste. The contest, as a matter of fact, is for the final elimination of brute force as the arbiter of international relations, and for the enthronement of reason and good sense and goodwill and brotherhood as the vital and rightful factors in all the inter-relations of Europe and the world. It may not be seen by the combatants, or admitted by those who have originated this awful butchery; but it is certain that it is an armed resistance for the most precious ethical and Christian ideas of social and political government wrought out in the long evolution of the life of man; for independence, "liberty, equality and fraternity," as against the unchecked and

disastrous sway of sword and cannon; for the rule of the people by the people, and for the people, as against that of war-lords and war oligarchies.

Most observers have noted with apprehension and alarm the triumph of materialism in the thought and practice of Prussia, and in regions far beyond, within the last four decades. The teaching of Nietzsche is yielding its predicted harvest. The "Superman" has arrived, all brawn and brain and without conscience. "Might is right." "Nothing is true: everything is permitted to the strong."*

But we must discriminate. As that caste is not the German people, so Prussia is not Germany. At the last General Election, let it be remembered, the Peace party in Germany triumphed over the War party in Berlin, and though now condemned to silence, yet

---

MILITARISM A TREACHEROUS ENEMY.

* Dr. Jefferson, of Broadway Tabernacle, New York, after a sojourn in Europe, said to the Congregational Club: "I have studied every country of Europe, and I came home this last time more convinced than ever that militarism is materialism in its deadliest incarnation; that it is commercialism in its most voracious development; that it is atheism in its most devastating form; that it is the most colossal of all extant humbugs, the most gigantic swindle since Tetzel sold indulgences. I am persuaded that the militaristic hierachy is the most treacherous and despotic enemy that has lorded it over the nations since the power of Rome was shattered, and that unless the Christian Church puts on the whole armour of God and goes out united to make war upon this Goliath that struts in armour-plate and boasts of bayonets and lyddite shells, it renounces the mission to which it has been called and surrenders its position as God's anointed leader and saviour of mankind."

it was and is a growing power in the State. This is manifested by the great Labour vote, on the one hand, and by the stirring manifesto in favour of peace issued a few days ago, by the Labour leaders, on the other. Further, it is alleged that "Bavaria has registered a protest against the war," notwithstanding the fact that the army of Bavaria is fighting under the lead of the Emperor. Nor can I believe, from what I saw and heard in the Grand Duchy of Baden, where we held our Conference, that the people of Baden, or of Saxony, or of Wurtemberg, are eager for this brutal method of facing European problems. The cheering fact is, that never were the intelligence, the convictions, the heart and the will of the civilised world so largely and so definitely opposed to war as at the present moment. Never were they so sure of its economic folly, its utter absurdity as a method of settling difficulties, and of its anti-human character. The peoples do not want it. They endorse Jaurès' last words, "There is no excuse for war." "It is a crime," "a monstrous folly." It is not the whole of the German people who are striking this blow at the heart of Europe's best life, it is a military clique who refuse to arbitrate, to hear the voice of reason, scorn all moral considerations, and let slip "the dogs of war."

You know how intensely I hate, and persistently oppose, war. To me it is a thousand times accursed. It is anti-

Christian, inhuman, wicked, devilish, a tool of savages and not of men. Never have I accepted the false doctrine, "My country—right or wrong." I reject it utterly and always. Our rulers have been in the wrong and I have felt compelled to oppose them. I could do no other. From first to last I fought against the Boer War: it was wrong in its initiation, as it was disastrous in its results. In Germany I felt and said that our course in this war ought to be one of complete neutrality. I was grieved and astonished to find on my arrival in England that the Government had declared war against Germany, and I was compelled to ask whether our Government had been forced to take the step they had taken. They had not sought war. They had worked for peace—persistently and patiently. Our place in the war was not of choice. No doubt Germany had felt the long pressure of Russia on her frontiers and all that it meant; but we were driven to defend, with all our might, the most precious ideas and principles and possessions, not merely of British and European, but of human well-being.

That, however, is not all; nor does it relieve us of responsibility for the unsheathing of the British sword. I cannot doubt that we ourselves have to a large extent created the circumstances which have made our intervention inevitable. We have entered into the comity of Europe. We have

sustained the false doctrine of the maintenance of the "Balance of Power" by the sword; and so shared that materialism in thought and life out of which our present misery springs. The "Concert of the Powers" has been a concert of brute force, and not of reason and justice and goodwill. It is this we have upheld. This created the entanglement which has drawn us to the battle-field and forced us to pay the price of our unwisdom. The deed is done, "The great outstanding pinnacle of fact is, perhaps, the definite entrance of England into the comity of Europe." Our isolation is gone. The die is cast; cast for the whole Empire, for Ireland as well as England, for Canada and Australia as well as Scotland and Wales; and what it means, and in what it will issue, no mortal can tell. To me it raises the question, and I submit it for your thought, whether this trouble has come upon us as part of the divine order, so that we may be compelled to share in making it absolutely impossible for the peoples of Europe to be subjected to the disastrous domination of any military caste whatever, Russian or Prussian, or of "a Concert of Powers."

And now, being committed to this war, a war that may last for a long time, let us ask, What are we as Churches to do while it continues?

First, we may never forget the word of the prophet that "In quietness and in confidence is our strength." "He

that believeth will not make haste." "God is our refuge," "He sitteth above the floods." He is our salvation, and in His presence fearfulness and doubt concerning the final issues are unworthy. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and He shall strengthen thine heart." "Wait," it is said again; and it is the one thing that is worth saying all the time, "Wait on the Lord."

The policy of the foe will be to create a panic. "This has always been the aim of our enemies in war time." "Napoleon claimed that the expense and fear which his preparations (in the ports between Ostend and Cherbourg) caused in England amply warranted the cost of his enormous flotilla, though it was never put to serious use." Threats of invasion will be made. Rumours of raids will be heard. Alarms will fill the air, not because anything desperate and dangerous is being attempted, but to produce confusion. They abounded in the days of Pitt, but he disregarded them. We must not permit ourselves to be ensnared. Cultivate vigilant scepticism with regard to the news of the war. Wait and test the printed page. In quietness you will obtain peace of mind, and waiting upon God you will renew strength of understanding, of self-control, of sweet reasonableness, and loving service.

It is also a primary function of the Church to accept all the implications of the fact of universal brotherhood,

and to obey, with courageous confidence, the lofty teachings of Christ concerning the treatment of enemies. From the heart, Christians must forgive those who are guilty of this atrocious crime of war. If they are our enemies—and those who are not the authors but the vicarious sufferers in this war cannot be said to belong to that category—nevertheless, we are to love those who are our actual foes, and pray for them, and seek their good. Exacting as this duty is, the followers of Christ have no release from it, under any circumstances whatever. We must uphold the teaching of our Lord, and we only do that effectually by practising it.

A state of war neither destroys the broad fundamental relation of brotherhood nor releases us from its obligations. The solidarity of the human race is not broken. God has made us of "one blood." We must, therefore, maintain the ministry of intercession for all soldiers and sailors, for the sick and wounded; for homes saddened by separation, for fathers and mothers whose sons have gone to the war, for wives bereaved of their husbands; for all in anxiety and fear in all nations of Europe, and irrespective of race and nationality, and for the speedy return of Peace. God calls us to a love like His own, and if we wait on Him He will shed it abroad in our hearts. God calls us to prayer, and the God of Jacob will surely "hear us in this day of trouble."

Nor must the Churches fail to lessen both at home and abroad all the evils of this time of war. We must foster unity and peace, pity and sympathy. Our industries must be kept going as nearly as possible in a normal way. The usual order of our business day must be maintained. Employees must not be thoughtlessly dismissed or their wages selfishly reduced. Waste must be avoided, the traffic in intoxicants reduced, the hours of sale diminished, and all "treating" of recruits with alcohol rigidly excluded. The simple life must be lived in the love of God and of our fellow-men, and the inevitable calamities, and special needs that follow in the wake of the demon of war, prepared for, as fully as possible, and we shall come out of the fiery furnace of this awful time as purified gold.

Already the Churches are preparing for loving service. Suffering is being alleviated; the sorrowing are being comforted; those flung out of work are being cared for. Borough and district committees are devising liberal things. Our National Relief Fund grows day by day. The women of the Churches are organising to assist as the needs increase, and there is a good prospect that the generous sympathies and activities of our people will as the new needs arise, cope with them with characteristic efficiency and success.

And now comes the question most important of all.

What are those results we must work for, with all the co-operation and

concentration that as Christian Churches, we can secure ? When war ends, what is to follow ? If the Churches know their duty, and have the courage to face it, they will see to it that the settlement that ensues shall be so fair and right that it will leave no just cause of future quarrels ; and if, in spite of that, such quarrels should arise, they will arrange that the quarrels shall be decided without the sword, and so they will make this great war the last war, the war followed by an eternal peace.

The Churches must destroy, out and out, the patent fallacy that the way to peace is to be prepared for war. That old lie is discredited for ever. Has not this war leapt straight out of an armed peace, the like of which the world never knew before ? Can it be doubted that it made arbitration impossible ? Did not the combatants refuse the appeal to reason because they were organised and equipped to the last button of their machinery for war ? Is it not true that the " great armament manufacturers and army contractors were," as Mr. C. R. Buxton says, " straining every nerve to push the Governments into war " ? Has not Europe been an armed camp ; its manhood a drilled body of soldiers ; its millions of money spent on battleships and field artillery ; and do not the labouring people of this hemisphere know the truth of Bastiat's words that " The great ogre war devours as much when he is asleep as when he is

awake"? Never again may the Churches feed the octopus of militarism with the pernicious and hateful dogma that States prevent murder by preparing year in and year out to commit it!

Another task demanding the fullest concentration of the powers of the Churches is that of breaking up at the earliest possible moment the gigantic private trade in the implements of war now being carried on in England and Germany, France and Russia, and in other lands.

There is a trade, a private trade, in war-making. It is one of the most menacing facts of our international life. The evil is as enormous as it is subtle, and as iniquitous as it is corrupt. Groups of men are leagued together in order to extract immense sums of money out of the manufacture of arms. Mr. J. A. Hobson, speaking of the book called "The War Traders," by G. H. Perris, says, "The story is positively fascinating in its wickedness." Politicians and industrial potentates are not only directing companies of armament builders, but controlling the Parliaments of Europe. For though war does not pay the nations which engage in it, these manufacturers become millionaires by making the instruments of war; and to achieve their ends they manipulate the Press. They create war-scares. "Illicit commissions" are secured. Bribery and corruption of officers of Government departments take place. They change the fashion in arms,

scrapping those of last year, by which they made vast profits, and introducing new machinery this year, for the sake of further profits. Capitalism is inventing and concentrating more and more amongst the traders in armaments. The Churches must surely concentrate to destroy these money interests of private persons in war panics, for they threaten not only the peace of the world, but the purity of our political life and the progress of righteousness and liberty.

Next, the Churches must see to it that the peoples of Europe are reorganised on the sure basis of an abiding peace. Our business is to get the ideals of Christ realised in the new map of Europe. The States of Europe, great and small, first, and finally of the whole planet, must be federated on the foundation of international agreement, with just international laws, with an International Court to administer the laws, and an International Police to execute the laws. That is our goal. The vision of Kant, in his Everlasting Peace, must guide us. A common understanding amongst the peoples of Europe, an acceptance of methods of unified compulsion, carried out by an international police against a criminal State, compelling it, by blockade or by boycott, to accept the verdict of the International Tribunal, just as individuals within a State or a municipality are compelled to abide by the law of the Nation or the State.

An International Court of Justice was

one of the results of the Second Hague Conference. It has not yet definitely come into existence; but the third Hague Conference ought to undertake that task and give it a definite constitution, mark out the methods of procedure and the laws according to which it is to act. Long has it been desired. It is for the Churches to work, with one mind and will, to see that it is accomplished in and through the settlement following this war.

To accomplish this the Churches must labour to change the thought and opinion of the people with regard to war. Nearly all our teaching about war is wrong. We begin in a wrong way with our children. Boys are taught to play at soldiering, to admire generals as the greatest heroes, and instead of being made sick with the horrors and savagery of war, they are led to regard the soldier's life as noble and glorious, an altogether desirable career. The history we give them is made up of war stories, whilst the heroes and achievements of commerce and literature, of art and science, of morals and religion, are assigned a secondary place. The Churches have to teach that nations are members one of another, that they are interlocked, and that damage inflicted on one is hurt to all; that war is murder, premeditated, deliberate, unmitigated murder; that the patriotism of peoples is exploited in the favour of military castes and for private firms; whilst the people themselves have no voice in

regulating the costs they have to pay or the terms on which citizens shall kill each other. The Churches should create an educated body of peace messengers, show nations that they should spend money in making apostles and advocates of Christian ideas of war and peace, and not upon the invention of instruments of destruction. Oh! when will the Churches understand their duty and use their opportunity as the representatives of the Prince of Peace?

Further, ought not the Churches of the Son of Man to make it their business to see that the European populations shall be set free from the concerted dictation and tyranny of the "Powers" —*i.e.*, of twenty or thirty individuals, most of whom are bound up with or swayed by military ideas? Must we not do our best to give the different peoples of Europe time, opportunity, and means to decide for themselves how they wish to be governed? Why should not the Albanians be encouraged to shape their own political future? Why may not the three divisions of ancient Poland say for themselves whether they wish to be united together under the rule of Russia, or to become a Republic, to enthrone a Constitutional King or create a Swiss Confederation? Should not the Churches do all that is possible to realise the highest ideals of individual and social well-being in the reconstruction that must follow when the blare of the war-trumpets and the din of the war-drums are heard no longer?

PHOTOMOUNT
PAMPHLET BINDER
PAT. NO.
877188
Manufactured by
GAYLORD BROS. Inc.
Syracuse, N. Y.
Stockton, Calif.

Date Due

[illegible]			
MAY 2 8 [illegible]			
JUN 1 5 [illegible]			
APR 1 0 [illegible]			

D639 .R4C63
The war and the churches.
Princeton Theological Seminary-Speer Library
1 1012 00045 6535